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Auguste Comte, Renan, Taine, together with a vast number of subsidiary thinkers. It is mathematics, that, according to Lévy-Bruhl, is the peculiar signature of French philosophy; in nearly every case the studies of the great philosophers began with geometry and analysis (think only of Descartes, Pascal, Malebranche, Fontenelle, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Comte, Renouvier, and Cournot); and hence its predilection for "clear ideas," for "methods," and for deduction as the mode of philosophic procedure. The French philosophers have not been original metaphysicians; they have excelled rather in the philosophy of the sciences, in moral philosophy, and in the theory of classification. Moreover, they have been eminently practical, popular, and unnational, and have appealed to all mankind.

In fine, says the author, "there has been in French philosophy for three centuries a singular persistency of the Cartesian spirit; whether the stamp of the first great modern philosopher was indelible, or whether—which is more likely—Descartes expressed in his doctrine the essential features of the French genius, which caused his influence to co-operate with the tendency of the national temperament. This spirit, which had become predominant by the end of the seventeenth century, was transmitted in the eighteenth through Fontenelle and Montesquieu, prevailed among the 'philosophers,' and even in Condillac, and spent itself in the French Revolution, to be revived in the nineteenth century, modified, but still recognisable, in Auguste Comte. This spirit was wonderfully adaptable to the task of criticism incumbent upon modern philosophy when once out of the Middle Ages and past the Renaissance and the Reformation. The main object was to definitely separate scientific or philosophical speculation from theology, and to overthrow the entire body of institutions based on a historical tradition which was often indefensible, in order to establish in their place a just system. To this work French philosophy was peculiarly adapted by reason of its rational, universal, and humane character, and of its insistence upon logical clearness."

M. Lévy-Bruhl has not neglected living philosophers, and his brief résumé of "the contemporary movement" in French thought contains much information that can scarcely be found elsewhere. All in all, his work is one that appeals as much to the reader of history and literature as to the student of philosophy; it is the story of the development of a great nation's thought, excellently conceived and admirably executed. The intrinsic attractiveness of the book has been greatly enhanced by the bookmaker's art, and its human interest has been heightened by the addition of twenty-three handsome photogravure and half-tone portraits, some of them quite rare. A practical bibliography of works on French philosophy has also been added.

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THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS. AN ECONOMIC STUDY IN THE EVOLUTION OF INSTITUTIONS. By *Thorstein Veblen*. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1899. Pages, viii, 400. Price, \$2.00.

It is the purpose of Mr. Veblen's work to "discuss the places and value of the leisure class as an economic factor in modern life." The institution of the leisure

class, according to him, is found in its best development at the higher stages of the barbarian culture, as in feudal Europe and feudal Japan. It is here that those "invidious distinctions" between classes and employments and that "animus or spiritual attitude" on which the institution of a leisure class rests are seen to their best advantage. The leisure class emerged during the transition from primitive savagery to barbarism. The conditions necessary to its emergence were: (1) a predatory habit of life, and (2) sufficient ease of subsistence to exempt a considerable portion of the community from the routine of labor. In societies distinguished by these two attributes, aggression becomes the accredited form of action. The obtaining of goods by other methods than seizure is accounted unworthy of man in his best estate. No employment and no acquisition is morally possible to the self-respecting man at this cultural stage, except such as proceeds on the basis of prowess, viz., force or fraud. Labor acquires a character of irksomeness by virtue of the indignity imputed to it. The ethics and public opinion of the community at this stage are but the natural and logical expression of these views. "Honorable" connotes nothing but the assertion of superior force, a "honorific" act is a successful predatory act; and the predilection shown in heraldic devices for rapacious beasts and birds of prey is merely the survival of the dominant spirit of this period. The taking of life, the killing of formidable competitors, whether brute or human, is the most "honorific" of all the acts of man, and "this high office of slaughter," says Mr. Veblen, being the expression of the slayer's transcendent might, "casts a glamour of worth over every act of slaughter and over all the tools and accessories of the act." The handling of arms is the "honorific" employment *par excellence*. The handling of the tools and implements of industry is beneath the dignity of able-bodied men.

From this basis Mr. Veblen pursues the main economic aspects of the history of the leisure class from the days of barbarism to the present time. The introduction of ownership into society brings with it another form of strife, viz., pecuniary emulation, and the resultant struggle for still higher "conspicuous leisure" with its attendant "conspicuous consumption." The forms which conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption take are illustrated by arguments drawn from everyday life, and are analysed with a clearness which does much toward enforcing Mr. Veblen's views. The pecuniary standard of living in modern society and the pecuniary canons of taste in modern society, dress as an expression of pecuniary culture, industrial exemption and conservatism as a distinguishing mark of leisure, are then interestingly discussed.

The most attractive chapters of the book are those on the conservation of archaic traits, on modern survivals of prowess, the belief in luck, and devout observances, all of which are shown to be survivals, in their most exquisite form, from the barbaric periods in which the leisure castes were instituted. For example, under the heading of "Survivals of Prowess" are mentioned the duel, boys' military organisations, hunting, and certain forms of athletic sports. The chapter on

"Devout Observances" is coldly analytic. Devout habits are regarded as the survivals of an archaic scheme of life which has outlived much of its usefulness for the economic conditions of to-day, and are held to involve the same philosophy of life as the sporting, gambling, or athletic habit. The final chapter on "The Higher Learning as an Expression of the Pecuniary Culture" involves many points of view which should receive consideration. The universities are shown to be largely institutions which support the leisure-class scheme of life, for they involve a notable element of conspicuous waste of time and substance; and their archaic propensities for spectacular effect, their championism of the studies which involve high consumption and low industrial efficiency, their hankering after antique symbols as shown in the recent adoption of cap and gown as learned insignia, their trivialities in points of form and ritual, their excessive encouragement of athletic sports, are all emphasised as social reversions to the barbarian stage.

It is to be remembered, however, that the criticism of existing constitutions advanced in Mr. Veblen's work is exclusively the expression of the economic point of view, and that a multitude of considerations may be advanced for the refutation of certain of his main tenets. Society is not exclusively an economic machine for the production of just that quantity of fodder which is necessary to sustain animal existence, and to ensure the perpetuation of the species; if it were, the lowest forms of life would have to be considered the most successful, and the farthest advanced evolutionally. Society is also an engine for life, and it may legitimately subserve the higher aims and ideals of life, which alone make existence tolerable, even when it appears disjointed economically. Yet Mr. Veblen has written a very interesting work and one which will hold the attention of its readers. T. J. McC.

SOLOMON AND SOLOMONIC LITERATURE. By *Moncure Daniel Conway*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Pp., 248. Price, \$1.50 (6s.).

This latest production of Mr. Conway's pen may be regarded from both a literary and a scientific point of view as the ripest fruit of his long-continued activity in the realm of comparative mythology; and its reading will be invested for every one with an unfailling and uninterrupted charm, no matter what ground of difference one may have with the peculiar tenets, or with the intellectual and emotional prepossessions, of the author.

"There is a vast Solomon mythology," says Mr. Conway, "in Palestine, Abyssinia, Arabia, Persia, India, and Europe; the myths and legends concerning the traditional Wisest Man are various, and merit a comparative study they have not received." Taking this mythology as his text, he proposes "to study the evolution of the human heart and mind under influences of which a peculiar series is historically associated with Solomon's name." He finds running throughout the whole a bifold evolution. He says:

"While in various parts of Europe 'Solomon's Seal,' survival from his magic